RNA FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

RIVERVIEW Neighborhood Association

1985 – APRIL ISSUE 232 Ogden Avenue – Jersey City, N.J. 07307 – (201) 798-0493

. . . On Mountain Road - Part II

At the March 12th RNA meeting, the second part of the Forum on the Mountain Road was held. Guest speakers from the government were Councilman Thomas Hart, Deputy Chief Frank Racaniello from the Fire Department, and Victor Tagliafero, from the Traffic Department. Each official was asked to speak on why the road was closed and describe any future plans for the road that their department was aware of. This was followed by questions from the floor.

Both Mr. Racaniello and Mr. Tagliafero indicated that their departments had no position on the opening or closing of the road, but had acted in response to what was perceived as a request from the community to close the road. They both indicated that whatever decision the community made, would be implemented. The Fire Department position is that the closing of the road does not interfere in any way with firefighting and Mr. Racaniello further indicated that the opening of the road during the Ponte fire was ordered by Tex Aldredge in connection with possible toxic waste and not by the Fire Department. Further, it was explained that the closed road caused no delay in responding to the Ponte Fire because the first alarm was responded to by the downtown fire station per protocol. Mr. Tagliafero presented two recommendations from the Traffic Department if the community decides to open the road. These are: 1) a speed limit of 15 miles per hour and 2) the road be one-way east (towards Hoboken). Mr. Hart explained the history of the road closing due to dumping and car abandonment and other negative (and often criminal) behaviors on that road. He said that the road was closed by an act of legislation after having gone through the appropriate channels (Fire, Police and Traffic Departments). At that time, no community opposition to the experimental one-year closing was in evidence.

In response to questions from the floor, it emerged that some community residents feel that the road closing has created traffic jams on Congress Street and Paterson Plank Road and Ogden Ave. Hart believes that the increased traffic is caused more by an increase in our commuting population rather than by the re-routing of traffic. Hart stated that if the road remains closed, the government would clean up and renovate New York Ave. (also known as Ravine Road) and this would provide ample access to and from Hoboken.

Many RNA members felt that misuse of the Mountain Road was not a reason to close it. Anne Hart, on the other hand, pointed out that while there are several ways to drive between Hoboken and Jersey City, there is only one strictly pedestrian way, and that is the Mountain Road.

After the question and answer period, members of the floor were allowed to make statements regarding their opinions on the road. Most of the statements had already been made at the first Mountain Road Forum on February 12th. One piece of new information came from Natalie Zanetich, Administrator of Harbor View Health Care Center. Ms. Zanetich, who said she was responsible for the safety and well-being of 180 residents, 150 staff members and thousands of visitors, spoke for keeping the road closed and indicated that the difference in noise, property damage, theft, vandalism, etc. is so marked since the road has been closed that she believes she could not feel secure in her role of protecting those people if the road were reopened. She asked the group to please consider keeping the road closed.

A closed vote was made and came out 21 to 18 in favor of reopening the road. Chairman Vito Brunetti has informed Thomas Hart's and Mayor McCann's offices of this vote. The issue will continue to be discussed at RNA's April 9th meeting and a proposal for a door-to-door petition campaign to further poll the community will be presented by Brunetti.

– Edith Springer

ONE WAY APPROVED! ONE WAY

Traffic Direction Change for Ogden Ave.

Traffic Ordinance MC812, based on RNA's proposal to change the direction of traffic on Ogden Avenue to stop cars from speeding through our street to avoid lights on Palisade Avenue, has been adopted by the City Council. The first reading of our proposal at the City Council was on March 14. After that, the matter went to the state level for feasibility studies. The proposal was returned to the City Council for a second reading on March 28 and after the public hearing, a vote was taken. It passed 6-0. The Ordinance will be implemented into law 20 days from the date of adoption, which will be April 17th. As of that date, the Traffic Engineering Department will order appropriate signs from the Division of Signs, which will be placed on Cuneo Place, Griffith St. and Ogden Ave.

There may be some confusion at first, so please, remember to look for the signs.

Who says you can't change things?

– Michael Cioffi

HUDSON CITY ad-hoc debate committee

Bob Lewis and Vito Brunetti organized the first meeting of the Hudson City Ad-hoc Debate Community on April 22 at the Harbor View Health Care Center. The HCAHDC is a non-partisan organization made up of community associations created for the specific purpose of sponsoring the debate for Council candidates for Ward D. The Debate Committee feels that a debate is the best forum for the voters to see and hear the candidates in person. The candidates for Ward D are: Thomas Hart, Daniel Waddleton and Charles Hrbek, Jr.

The date and location for the debate have been set for April 30th at Public School No. 8, at Franklin Street and Hancock Ave.

The debate is being planned to have a moderator and a panel of three people selected from

(Continued on Page 3, column 1)

planning and development committee works hard

The Planning and Development Committee spent another busy month doing what it can to preserve the good character of the Riverview neighborhood.

The big event of the month was the meeting three weeks ago with Mark Munley, director of city planning. RNA had 10 interested members who met with Mark on a beautiful Saturday morning, when we should have been out working on our backyards or playing in the park. However, it was definitely good to meet with him and get his views on everything from blight studies to development, and let him know personnally what we feel are the biggest problems facing us. He feels that private capital is the best way to develop our neighborhood and feels that blight studies are no an advantage in our neighborhood. One big problem brought up by several members was the parking situation which is getting worse as vacant lots are developed. After much discussion, Mark agreed to look into locating a municipal parking facility somewhere in our vicinity.

Another event was the variance request to build a three unit building at 441 Palisade. The Planning and Development Committee decided that even though it provided no parking it was definitely an improvement over the vacant lot and should be supported in principle, with the committee making a definite statement before the Board of Adjustment concerning our worries over the parking situation. The Board in its vote, felt that the architect and developer had not done enough to try to provide off street parking *anywhere* and turned down the request, much to the surprise of the applicant who probably had been told by other some city official not to worry about it.

As far as projects go which have been acted upon, Palisade Gardens well on its way, the demolition having taken care of itself. Its property at 179 Ogden, the cute little two-unit house which we saved, is still on the market, looking for a do-it-yourselfer to bring it back to life. The developer at 311 Palisade is on his way, having gotten final site plan approval for the apartments and stores which we supported. The Koven factory project is also starting very shortly, and the renovation by Jordan Industries of the Franklin-Ogden corner propertiesis well on its way.

Our best sources for information continue to be our neighbors who receive a notification, or read an article, or hear something on the street. If you find out about a new project, let us know, and if you want to join the committee, call me so I can notify you of meetings – Ed Lortz 795-5183 – or give me your name at the next meeting.

– Ed Lortz

Opinion *Letters to the Editor*

The comments expressed in this column reflect the opinion of the writer and not necessarily that of the RNA.

I am extremely concerned that funding for the "Heights Neighborhood Housing Service" was completely ignored, even after the C.D.B.G. advisory committee had recommended them. The Heights N.H.S. has had an immense impact on the quality of life here in the Heights. It has wholly or partially financed the repair/rehabilitation of existing homes by owners who were considered "unbankable" for various reasons, usually age or income. N.H.S. has also assisted in the conversion of previously commercial units to residential or loft-type uses especially in the Riverview Arts District. For those people who are not burdened by age or income restrictions, they act as a clearing house of information regarding the current market activities of various lending institutions and State programs, saving many people valuable time and money. Their expertise is not limited to the financial arena as they have assisted many homeowners who have never before dealt with contractors, to do so successfully. N.H.S. has also been instrumental in the implementation of "Heights Pride" activities as well as lending a helping hand to many of our new Block Associations.

Heights N.H.S. "has an impressive track record. Some of the funding requests that were approved have no record at all, or dubious ones at best. I also question the validity of approving projects/programs that still have much of their previous funding intact or ones that have spent large amounts on things that were not part of their original grant request.

It is curious, that in this a political year, Mayor McCann and his administration are not supporting a program that has done so much for us here in the Heights. The full approval of the grant requests and the resulting expansion of N.H.S. through increased services to a larger area can only enhance his prestige and that of his running mates here in the Heights. This a pocketbook issue, and unfortunately preople vote out of their pocketbook most of the time. The refinancing of N.H.S. through the C.D.B.G. program will also show that Jersey City is concerned not only with new development, but also with the maintenance of those things which have kept us strong for so long, our live here 1-4 family homeowners. Our reputation as a desirable place to live and work will be immeasurably enhanced and therefore attract even more of the "right kind" of people. Jersey City can continue to be turned around, but that turn around *must* include those people that the N.H.S. program best serves it cannot be done *only* by new development, condo and co-op conversions. Help N.H.S. continue to give the little guy a break.

Sincerely, Bob Lewis

ONE FROM THE "HART":
An Opinion of the Armand Beard Slide Show

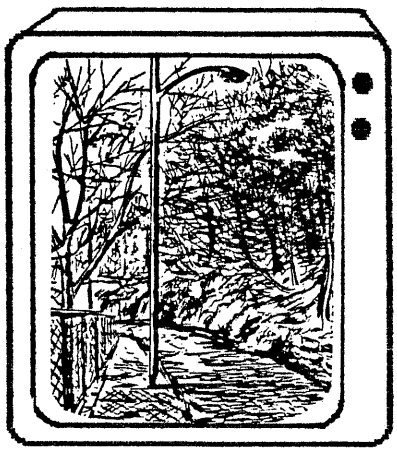
Last Monday, April 1, Armand Beard, the Central Avenue Business Manager, and Councilman Tom Hart's personal graphic artist, spoke before the Community Relations Council. Before a packed house of 50 people in the second floor meeting room of the North Precinct, Mr. Beard produced an audio-visual spectacular which was long on politics and short on substance.

Mr. Beard, armed with a sophisticated "Mr. Microphone" and hundreds of color slides, which he had personally taken, dazzled the audience with before and after photographs of various Heights locations. It was as if "The Music Man" was leading the parade down Central Avenue (Right Here) in Hudson City with a capital "D" that stands for Development.

(Continued on Page 3)

CHANNEL 9 DOES FEATURE ON MOUNTAIN ROAD . . .

Channel 9's *New Jersey People* program, aired on Sunday mornings, has shot a feature spot on Mountain Road. Annie Hart, Leon Parham and Ted Conrad and other residents were interviewed and they videotaped some footage of our road and our view of the New York skyline. Air date is not known as of this time. Consult your TV listings.



AD-HOC DEBATE COMMITTEE . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

the community. The moderator will be responsible for running the debate and maintaining order. The panel members will ask pre-selected quesions to the candidates. The questions will be chosen by the debate committee. A list of possible choices for both moderator and panelists will be given to each of the Council candidates for review and approval.

The HCAHDC is trying to create an objective non-partisan atmosphere for the candidates to present their ideas to the community. The committee hopes the public's participation will help achieve a well balanced forum for this important event.

– Vito Brunetti

PARKS COMMITTEE REPORT

The RNA Parks Committee has written to Councilman Hart regarding the Riverview Park Restoration Project and its difference of opinion concerning some of the priorities. While the Committee applauds the renovation of the gazebo and the installation of 19 trash bins, it is opposed to the plan to install 30 lamps. The Committee feels that the lamps chosen by the Restoration Project are not appropriate for the historic restoration planned for the park. In addition, the Committee feels that the illumination from these lights will obliterate the panoramic view of New York. They feel that at this time, the two new spotlights (one at the park entrance and one at the gazebo) plus the existing lights are sufficient. The Committee is in the process of gathering support from other block associations and the Neighborhood Improvement Program.

Anne Hart, a Committee member, is researching other types of lamps that would better meet the needs of the community and complement the historic restoration while illuminating the area.

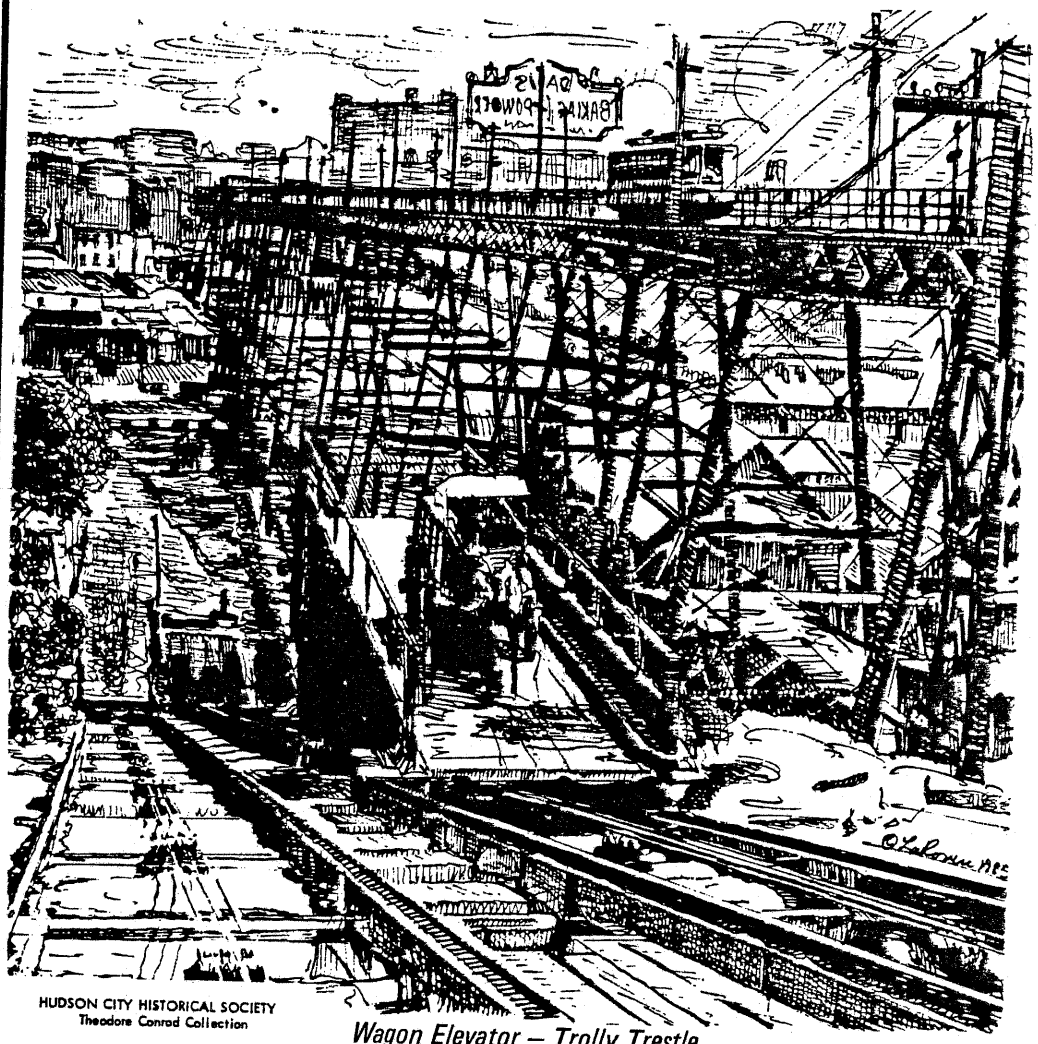
The Committee also indicated to Hart that RNA will consider having a debate similar to the Mountain Road Forum on the park restoration issue.

– Chuck Hollowel

BOGGS APPEARING IN BRECHT PLAY

Ellen Boggs, Secretary of RNA, is currenttly appearing in a play called "Roundhead and Pointheads" by Bertolt Brecht at the Cubiculo Theatre, 414 W. 51st St. until April 14th. Tickets are $8.00 ($3.00 with TDF) and the number to call for reservations is (212) 265-2138.

Some of the cast will join Ellen for some songs from the play at our Flea Market on May 4th.



HUDSON CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Theodore Conrad Collection

Wagon Elevator – Trolly Trestle
Ferry St./Ogden Ave. – 1932 – Theodore Conrad Collection

OPINION – ONE FROM THE HART

(Continued from page 2)

Pointing out endless photos of storefront facades which he helped finance by administering city money we saw a new, yet one could hardly call it better, Central Avenue of tacky aluminum siding, garish signs, and too-ugly-to-believe brickface.

The attitude of Armand Beard was clearly broght forth with one picture after another of a dead town which was dramatically brought back to life by his office and solely his office. Yet, not one single mention of the host of Heights homeowners, various neighborhood assistance agencies and private developers who have given their blood and sweat to the area without the benefit of Councilman Tom Hart's Heights publicity campaign.

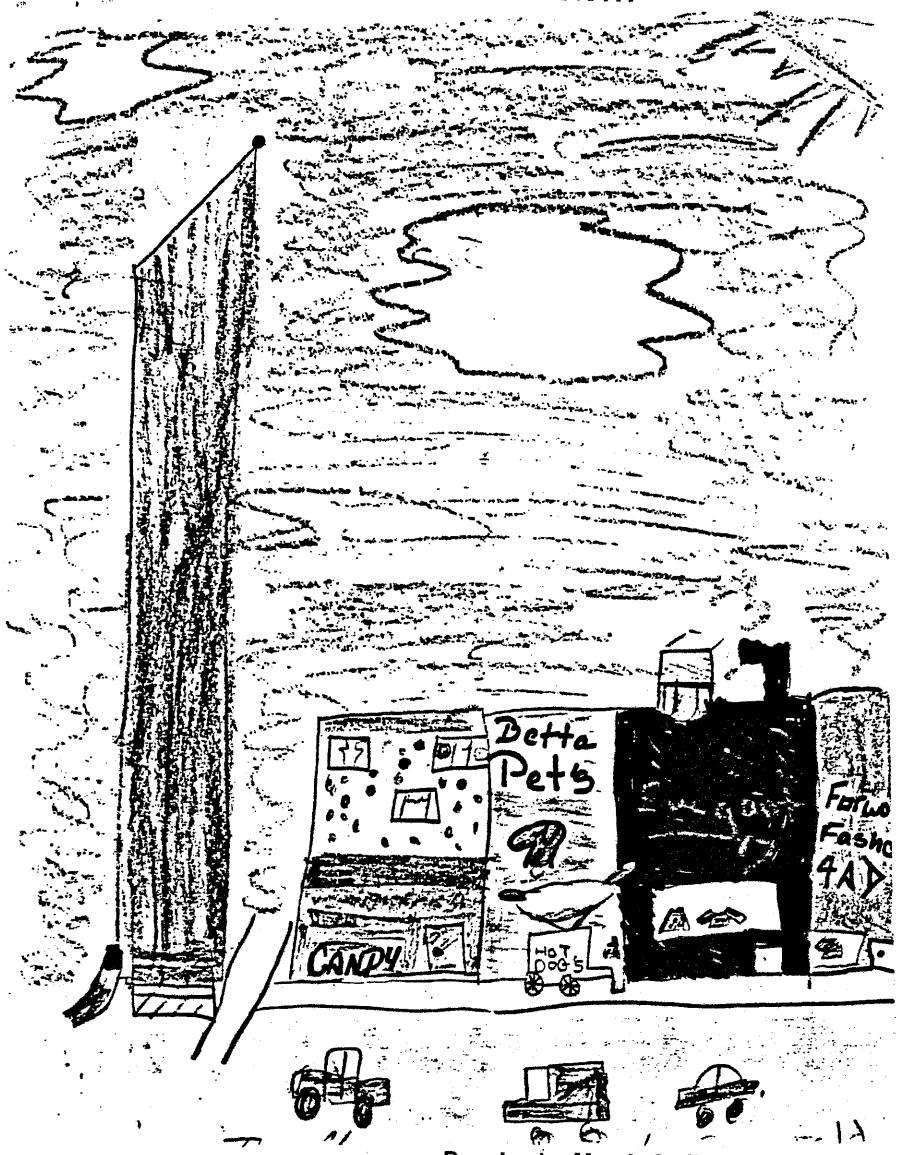
What I feel has to be considered, especially now that the political season is once again here, is that the economic prosperity of the last three years has more to do with the re-awakening of the Heights, Jersey City and New Jersey than our local politicians. We have got to feel a little leery of incumbents latching onto the coattails of New Jersey's economic boom, and calling it their own.

Tom Hart might be the right man for Ward D, then again he might not. However, I for one, feel that Armand Beard has got to go. My main reason for Mr. Beard's immediate removal is that he controls the purse strings for many city sponsored Heights programs, but with no real taste or thought as to how it will look. I believe that what is important now to the stable growth of the area is a qualified non-political Director to oversee, formulate and implement a controlled standard of high quality and not the quick, easy and cheap. I would like to see an accomplished new director for the Heights who would lean towards educating the residents and business owners to better understand the historic significance of their particular building. A strong director could, for one thing, advise and encourage the homeowner or shop merchant about the monetary value of restoration versus fake brickage and siding covered cornices.

For this important job we need quality in the Heights and not mediocrity.

Sincerely,
William Hart

ARTIST OF THE MONTH



Drawing by Maggie Sudbrink – 9 years old

SPECIAL THANKS TO KATHY BRENNAN FOR VOLUNTEERING HER TIME AND ENERGY TO THE NEWSLETTER.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Marie "Dee" Ipsaro
Liz Murray
Edith Springer
Raquel Sweeny

One last word:

Remember our next meeting

April 9th

FLEA MARKET PREPARATIONS COMING ALONG . . .

The excitement increases as details for our long-awaited RNA Flea Market get ready for Saturday, May 4th from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Among the articles for sale will be: books, clothing, housewares, food, art, including crafts, hand painted greeting cards, drawings and ceramics. Riverview Park will be cleaned for the day allowing the painters and ceramic artists to exhibit their work. There'll be a drawing table with paper and crayons for kids, of all ages. Their art work will be on sale, with the permission of the artists, of course.

Volunteers are needed to "person" the children's art table, the food sale tables, to participate in the pre-Flea Market clean-up of the park, to donate food for sale, to cook hot dogs, to distribute fliers, etc. Please contact Carin Lewis, Chairperson of the Flea Market Committee at 420-1490 or Edith Springer at 798-0493.

Here is a chance for people to give their valuable skills, labor and energy to our neighborhood.

Rain date for the Flea Market is Saturday, May 11th.

– Liz Murray

RNA SPRING CLEANING APRIL 18th-21st

Thursday, April 18th through Sunday, April 21st, will the first annual RNA Spring Cleaning. The project is still in the planning stage. The schedule, so far, is:

Thurs. - 4/18: 9:30-11:	Joint Activities Program – Mountain Road and the surrounding area. Refreshments will be provided by Harbor View Health Care Center. V. Ponte will provide a roll-off container.
Fri. - 4/19:	Any suggestions?
Sat. - 4/20: Sun. - 4/21:	Roll-off containers will be available for large items – locations to be announced.

If you have any suggestions or want to volunteer to supervise a container on the weekend, call Anne Hart at 795-2664.

– Anne Hart

IT'S YOUR PARK !

IT'S YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD !!

IT'S YOUR PRIDE !!!

CONTRIBUTE !!!